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ABSTRACT

These proceedings consist of: a brief opening address by Ms. Val Emerson, Director of the Virginia Division for Children and Youth; a keynote address, "Perspectives on the Family," by Dr. Earl S. Schaefer of the University of North Carolina; and a dialogue on "Programs and Practices for Professionals Working With Parents" by Dr. Ann O'Keefe, Director of the Family Program, U.S. Navy, and by Ms. Florence Seguin, Training Specialist for Children First, Inc. Also included is a short list of resources for parenting. Dr. Schaefer's address contrasts two views or approaches to the problems of children and their education: the individualistic perspective and the socio-ecological perspective. He proposes that we move towards the latter perspective, one which focuses on the total social environment of the family and community, rather than just on the child-professional relationship. He emphasizes the importance of working with parents, and of improving their abilities to foster their children's development and education. The dialogue by Dr. O'Keefe and Ms. Seguin expands on aspects of Dr. Schaefer's talk concerning the need to create parent-professional partnerships, what such partnerships mean, and practical suggestions for creating them. (SS)

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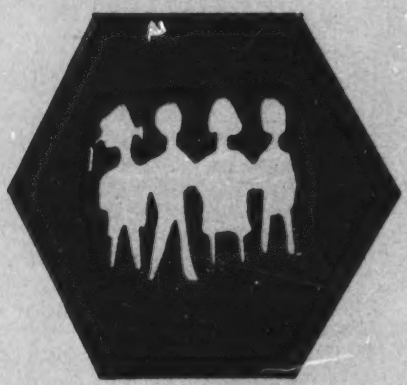
1979

# Parenting Conference

APRIL 25, 1979



## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS:

# "Professionals and Parents, Moving Toward Partnership"

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Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia

The Parenting Studies Committee, School of Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, organized and sponsored the first Parenting Conference on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University on April 25, 1979. Members of this committee represented various Divisions of the School of Education.

The Conference consisted of presentations by nationally known speakers plus morning and afternoon workshop sessions offered by faculty of the VCU School of Education. The messages of the speakers have been transcribed, edited, and are contained herein. Cumulatively they offer a clear and strong statement for parent-professional partnerships. A resource listing suggested by Ms. Florence Seguin has also been included.

Alice M. Pieper, Chairperson,
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"PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS: MOVING TOWARD PARTNERSHIP"

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These proceedings have been prepared by Alice M. Pieper, Chairperson, Parenting Studies Committee, Virginia Commonwealth University.

September 1979

Greetings:

Ms. Val Emerson, Director, Virginia Division for Children and Youth

What you are about today is very important. In 1977-78 a needs assessment was conducted by the Virginia Commission of Children and Youth throughout the state. We interviewed a large number of parents and children asking them what they felt their problems and needs were. That resulted in a report. I would like to tell you some of what they said in reference to some of the things you will be talking about today.

In terms of parent child communication, one of the things that we were told by 17% of the children we surveyed was that they did not feel free to ask their parents for help. In terms of parent and professional communication, we found that families (parents and children) identified many problems for which they knew of no community resources available to assist them in solving the problems. So, in terms of the professional's role, we have failed in some sense to communicate to parents in the community the resources we do have available for them. It was particularly noticeable in the area of mental health services.

We found of the single parent families surveyed that in 11% of the families the father was absent and in 2% of the families the mother was absent. We also learned that in 1/3 of the households headed by women, the income level was less than $5,000 a year. That certainly made life and management difficult because of the very limited funds these women had to draw on.

Twenty-three percent of the parents that we surveyed felt that at some point in their childhood they were abused. Thus, almost a quarter of the parents surveyed felt they had been abused as children. If you subscribe to the theory that parenting is a learned behavior, the implications are that those parents might also, on occasion, abuse their children. We also found a high percentage of youngsters in these families (where parents felt they had been abused as children) who also felt that they were being abused.

In the area of child development and behavior, 15% of the parents stated they were having problems understanding and dealing with their children's behavior. My guess is there are a lot of other parents that were having problems but just hadn't identified them as such.

Forty-two percent of the parents indicated that they seldom or never attended activities in which their children participated. State-wide, almost 1/2 of the parents said that was the case. Thirty-two percent of the children stated that they did not participate in any school of community activity.

In terms of sex education, which I believe is one of the topics you'll look at today, it is obvious to us that somebody needed to do it. Thirty-one percent of the youth, ages 12-21, that were surveyed said they were sexually active and less than 1/2 of those youngsters were using any type of birth control.

Finally, in terms of psychological and social development problems, 20% of the children that we surveyed reported that they were angry or depressed a lot of the time, and 15% of the children said they liked to be alone most of the time. Ten percent felt that they had no one to discuss their problems with. From these responses I think you can see the importance of what you're about

today. There is a great need for the type of program which you are engaging in here. I wish you well in this endeavor!

Perspectives on the Family

Parenting Conference at the Virginia Commonwealth University

Earl S. Schaefer, April 25, 1979

This morning reminds me of a time in 1969 when I was just beginning to become aware of the importance of parents. I started out my talk with "It's a great day to begin a revolution." Well, I believe the revolution has begun . . . a revolution in the way we think about the needs of children. That revolution is really a renewed awareness of the major importance of parents and family in the child's total development. However, I think the insights of that revolution have not yet been thoroughly assimilated in our professions and programs for parents and children. I'd like to discuss some perspectives that I think are relevant to developing new professions and new institutions that relate to new families who raise a new generation of children.

As a preface to this discussion, Kuhn (1979) in his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions shows that a paradigm, or the way you think about a problem, really determines what you see as the problem or what you see as a possible solution. I'll talk about the paradigms that I think have guided us in the past in developing programs for parents and children, and the new paradigm that seems to be emerging as a way of helping parents and children. Because the paradigm determines our perspective--how we look at something and how we see it--it also determines how we react to it and how we try to solve the problem. A major contrast of the old and new paradigms is either seeing people as isolated individuals to be helped or seeing people as functioning in networks of relation-

ships. We might label the isolated person view the individualistic perspective, and the personal network of relationships view the socio-ecological perspective, that is, seeing that organism relating to its total social environment.

Let's look at problems of children from the individualistic perspective. If the child isn't learning, the solution is to bring him into the school. Thus, the child is seen as an isolated individual and the professional is seen as the person who can solve the problem. That perspective has led to an interesting sequence of events in education. First, we say that school during the elementary years cannot adequately educate children so we need to bring them into kindergarten, that is a focus on helping the individual child. Then, we find that kindergarten isn't enough to give the right start for some children so we bring them into preschool and/or Head Start. Then we say, preschool still isn't doing the job. Maybe we should offer developmental day care for all children. If that doesn't work we might consider the "Brave New World" solution of total institutional rearing of children. Thus, this scenario sees the child as an isolated individual and the professions and institutions as taking over to provide for his care and education. However, that perspective does not work in solving the problem of child development since it is so costly that the funds are not available to follow it to a logical conclusion. More importantly, that perspective does not work in developing healthy, well-educated, well-functioning, adjusted individuals. The individualistic perspective of helping the individual child really doesn't work.

Let's move to the ecological perspective which fosters a total social environment in the family and community that will nurture the development of

the child. That perspective suggests we must look beyond the professional institutional solutions of child development problems to a family and community perspective that will provide for the health, education, welfare and well-being of the child. That perspective suggests that we spend most of our time thinking about how we are going to support parents and families.

Yet, when I look at our current professions, institutions and programs . . . I ask, what proportion of our time is spent on strengthening and supporting families and what proportion of our time is spent in providing services to the individual child. I've asked nurse practitioners, for example, what proportion of their time do they spend in helping the parents develop skills in health care of the child and what proportion do they spend in diagnosing and treating the child. The proportions are approximately .90 direct treatment to .10 support for parenting. I wonder why we shouldn't turn that around and say that a greater proportion of our time should be spent supporting parenting and a smaller fraction of our time in providing direct care to children.

There is another part of this total perspective that I think is important to emphasize. In the past we have often thought of screening, diagnosing and treating or remediating problems. Some people call this a medical perspective, but I prefer to call it the pathological perspective. What do you do from this perspective? You wait until the isolated individual child has a problem. Then you screen for that problem. You diagnose that problem, you treat or remediate that problem, often by your profession and in your institution, and when the treatment is over the individual goes back to the family and community. That perspective is also not working because so often we find our treatments have

only short-term effects. After the child goes back to the family and community the problems reoccur unless we have improved the relationships in the family and community.

Once I proposed a life-time and life-space perspective on children as opposed to a 'what can we do for this child now' perspective on children and asked the question, "From the life-time and life-space perspective, when is the child educated?" If you answer via the professional-institutional perspective that education only goes on in schools, you must say that the child is educated when he comes in the classroom and you bring him into the classroom at an earlier and earlier age. The fact of the matter is that the major part of the child's education apparently does not go on in the classroom. I'll talk about that a bit more as I tell how I got started down this line of reasoning.

If we are developing day care for children, we often think of what happens in day care as the major part of the child's development. Yet if you look at the quality of the family life and the quality of parenting that the children who are in day care and early intervention programs are experiencing, the quality of parenting still has more effect on the child's development than the excellent day care program in which he or she is involved. Also, I found in my early infant education projects, that even though we made an impact through direct tutoring of children, the quality of parenting also made an impact on the child's development. Studies of children in day care also have brought the child's favorite day care workers together with the parent and then presented the child with a difficult problem and almost invariably the child goes to the parent for help. That shows the parent is still the major figure in

the child's life. Emmy Werner also found that if you ask young adults who really made a difference in their lives usually they name parents, peers, relatives, and community members. This suggests we should turn away from supplementing families and communities to a primary goal in all our professions and institutions of strengthening and supporting parenting and families as the major way of providing for the health, education and welfare of children. Vopava and Royce (1978) in a follow-up on the early intervention studies found the programs that showed the greatest long-term effects were programs that had clear goals for parents, that had home visits with parents, that began very early in the child's life, and also had a fairly high staff to child ratio. Even in the successful early intervention projects, the long-term success seemed to be from a major focus on influencing parenting in the early years.

Once I spoke to a group that was planning for the EPSDTP--Early Periodical Screening Diagnosis and Treatment Program. I was disturbed by the professional tone I heard and I got up and said, "In order to really help children, we are going to have to learn to communicate with, cooperate with, and collaborate with parents." A child psychologist replied emotionally, "How can you ask me to collaborate with parents, they are the people who are fouling up their children's lives and you ask me to collaborate with them." Let's look at that perspective. He had the perspective that the child is an isolated individual and he was going to rescue the child from those pathological parents. It was his goal to use the pathological perspective to screen, diagnose and treat the problem. That is not an effective way to provide for the health, education and

well-being of children, which I think are our real goals.

I'd like to talk a bit about some of my studies of children and classrooms since many of you are educators or working in day care. I find that teachers can really describe children's behavior very reliably and very validly. Let me tell you the major dimensions that the teachers see as adaptive, competent, adjusted behavior in the classroom. The one dimension which we are all concerned about in the classroom is academic ability--intelligence and achievement. The variable which is most highly related to academic ability in the classroom is verbal intelligence. Language skills as measured by teacher ratings of vocabulary, information, comprehension of language, assimilation of new ideas and generalization of ideas are highly related to test scores and achievement. Apparently what we need to develop achieving children in classrooms is parent skills in fostering language development. That isn't so surprising, is it? What do we do in the classroom? We talk and listen, read and write, and think; and language is the basic tool. I really began my work in early education when I realized that the child's language skills develop very rapidly in the first year of life. By the time the child is three, he can carry on a conversation with an adult. The major learning of the child of the major skill that contributes to academic achievement proceeds rapidly during early infancy through language experience in the family.

A second major dimension in the classroom that reflects the child's ability to relate to the teacher and other children in the positive considerate behavior of showing respect for others' rights, that is helpfulness, considerateness, and sympathy. Society needs people who respect the rights of others; who are willing to help others, share with others, and be sympathetic to others. The polar opposite

behaviors are hostility, aggression, cruelty and resentfulness, irritability, and other hostile social behaviors. Behaviors of considerateness versus hostility develop out of relationships in the early years of life and are maintained in family and community relationships. Another major dimension of adaptation and adjustment in the classroom that is developed through the early and continuing interactions with parents is task-orientation as opposed to distractible and hyperactive behavior. That seems to relate to family background too, the ability to work, to concentrate and persist in the classroom. Another factor in school adaptation is independence--decisiveness and initiative in doing one's own work as opposed to asking the teacher constantly what to do and how to do it. Another major area which we do not stress enough is curiosity and creativity in the child. The child who is curious and creative is motivated to learn new things and to develop new and interesting ideas, and those behaviors are correlated highly with family variables. The child's basic skills that lead to academic success are developed to a great extent in early and continuing relationships in the family. When we talk about <u>basic education</u> of teaching reading and writing and arithmetic in the classroom, is that really basic education, or is that only building on the basic skills already partially developed in families? I think that the second point of view is certainly true from the evidence of the importance of family.

I began on infant education in 1965. At the time I realized that at one year of age on the standard mental tests that measure sensory motor skills there are no difference in social class groups. However, by three years of age the major differences between social class groups have been stabilized. Even though individual children change within groups, the groups means have

developed by the age of three. At the age of three on our mental tests we measure language skills, so that early language learnings in the family really establishes the level of intellectual functioning. It not only establishes it, it maintains it. I was really startled to learn that school entrance does not change the level of intelligence of children from different social groups. In our current school systems, children seem to function at the level initially developed and then maintained by the family and community. That is a very challenging conclusion from research because it suggests the solution to our educational problems is not in the classroom alone, not in the preschool alone, not in day care alone, but in influencing the quality of parenting and the child's interactions in the community.

I was researching families before I began my infant education program. However, at that time I did not have enough trust in parents or enough trust in our ability to work with parents on the child's education, so we hired college educated tutors to go into the homes and work with the children an hour a day five days a week. That seemed successful on a short-term basis because the children did learn while we were there. But we followed the children for three years after the program ended and found there were no significant differences remaining three years after we stopped our program at three years of age. We found that children need early education. At fifteen months of age we were doing remedial education for some children who had not developed the ability to participate in activities and to relate to an adult that would allow the educational process to proceed. We had to spend time initially in developing relationships and in developing interests and in developing the child's ability to engage in activities. The project confirmed the need for early education

and also suggested that early education doesn't start at fifteen months but at birth.

We have also found in observing mothers in bathing, dressing, feeding and playing with their children at four months and one year of age that by four months we could very clearly see an 'infant educator' type of behavior. A mother who is playing with a child, talking with a child, stimulating the child, praising the child, and interacting with the child at four months has already begun the educational process that probably began at birth. We followed those same mothers and found them still talking, playing, praising and interacting with their children at one year of age. Think what that tells us . . . that that mother doing routine care of bathing, dressing, feeding and playing is really engaged in basic education. Isn't the basic educator the one who is there from birth and continues to support the child's education throughout the developmental years in the family? Are we going to develop a set of professions and institutions that is going to replace that system of educating children? We can't afford it. We can't do it. There are not enough professionals around. There is not enough money to pay those professionals. Professionals come in and out of the child's life, but who is there on an early and continuing basis?

I once listed the characteristics of parents that made it impossible for our professions and institutions to replace them. They include priority, right from the nutrition of the child in the womb and the mother's alcohol use and drug use. These things are already influencing the child in the womb, which suggests we need to be concerned about childbearing as well as childrearing and child education in the family. Parents have priority in the rearing of children. They also

have continuity. Excellent professionals can have an impact on the child's life for a brief period of time and I am not minimizing that importance. Children need good parents and they need good teachers. I learned good teachers do have an impact from some research I've done, but it is on a temporary basis and then the child goes on to someone else. Then consider the duration of parental contact of the child from birth to maturity. Think of all those years of influence on the child's total development in language and in interests and in socialization. The parents have a more intense relationship with the child than the professional. The professional has to maintain a certain degree of detachment and must relate to many children. The parent is often intensely involved with that child, sometimes with intense hostility and sometimes with intense love and affection. Influencing the parental-child relationship therefore should be a major goal. Also, the parent has a very extensive influence on the child's total life. We found that some parents are buying books for their children, they are taking them to the library, and they're providing lessons in the community. Parents are really programmers and organizers of the child's total experiences. The parents also provide much of the child's total experience right from birth onward. These characteristics of families, including the great variability in families, from extreme neglect and abuse to nurture and love, affection and education have a tremendous impact on children. Parents still have legal responsibility for their children. I think we should support that responsibility and encourage it through all of our programs and all of our activities rather than to imply that professionals can replace parents.

One of the parents in our infant education project in Washington, D.C., decided the child we were tutoring was our child and a baby that came along later was her child. She began educating her child and talking to her child and her child developed verbal skills far more rapidly than our child. How often does the professional really almost replace or supplant the parent in the child's education? We once talked to a mother of an autistic child who had been treated in a clinic in Boston. The psychiatrist saw the child and the mother was seen by the social worker. The psychiatrist would give the mother a bland smile as they would pass in the hallway. The mother was really enraged by the professional treatment of the psychiatrist taking over her child. Then the family came to North Carolina and enrolled in a program for autistic children in which parents were seen as partners and collaborators and the major figures in the child's treatment. That mother became a primary supporter of that program and helped the program get state funding for a larger program for autistic children.

Yet in a book on the relationships between parents and teachers, I ran across a chapter "Parents and Teachers . . . Natural Enemies"--how could that be? Is there rivalry, is there suspicion, is there lack of trust, is there lack of communication between professionals and parents? If there is, who is going to change that? What are our primary goals when we relate to parents? Are the primary goals to get parents to support our activities and give us more money to provide care for children in institutions? Are our goals to strengthen and support families and to treat them as partners and collaborators and to communicate and cooperate and work with them? I've asked teachers to rank order their goals with parents. Their primary goals are not to work with parents on the child's education,

it is a far more professional and institutional focus--to gain the parent's support for what the teacher is doing.

I learned from my infant education project that we'd started rather late at fifteen months, that we ended too early at three years and had the wrong focus of working directly with the child instead of with the parent. Having realized my errors, I talk to groups in support of parent-centered programs and advise them saying, "Don't do what I did, do what parent-centered programs such as Home Start are doing." I frequently contrast Levenstein's program in which with approximately 31 visits in the home, working directly with parents over a 7 to 8 month period, she had the same short-term effect on child development that we had with over 300 visits in the home during a 21 month period working directly with the child. Working with a parent with clear goals with 30 visits might have the same effect as working directly with a child for 300 visits. When we tested the children from our program three years after that direct tutoring of children, we found the results had washed out. Levenstein reports that the children in her program showed long-term gains. Vopava and Royce's (1978) analysis of the early intervention follow-ups supports Levenstein's findings. Having clear goals for parents and home visits do seem to have long-term effects on the child's continuing educational development. From a cost-effectiveness point of view, work with parents in the long run will be far more effective. In these days of declining budgets we really must learn to work with parents effectively. Think about it, we can't afford to have one professional per child, but certainly we can't afford to have two professionals per child, an adult to child ratio that exists in a family in which there is both an interested mother and father.

Let's look at the roles of mothers in the care and nurture of children. I stated earlier that we observed mothers during child care and isolated an interaction-stimulation or, infant-educator dimension in early infancy. We also found that in dressing and bathing the child we could observe a dimension of maternal acceptance, of gentleness, supportiveness and patience rather than irritability, hostility and negative comments or negative interactions with the child. The dimension of love and acceptance can also be seen in the mother's behavior in the early months of life. We found our observations of acceptance during bathing, dressing and feeding were related to subsequent reports that some of the mothers were abusing their children. These data suggest that we should be constantly supporting a positive relationship between mother and infant.

I also think we should be thinking of fathers. You know it still saddens me to look out at an audience like this and see that it is almost totally women. When are men going to realize that rearing our children--the next generation--is the most important task of this generation. From the point of view of survival of the species and survival of the culture, rearing the next generation is the most important thing we can do. Yet men say, "let women do it." How are we going to involve fathers in the activities of rearing and educating children? I see that as a major problem in our culture.

How can we involve other family members if there is no father in the home? In studies of social workers, occasionally the social worker seemed to be loosening the ties between the mother and her family rather than strengthening and supporting those ties. Maybe that arises out of this individual emphasis in seeing the family as pathological, as the problem, rather than as part of the solution. We

must learn to see fathers, grandmothers, relatives, extended families, and community members as part of the solution rather than as the problem. We must give up the fantasy that professionals are the rescuers who are going to rescue a child or mother and child from a pathological situation because it doesn't work. I was also troubled when a famous psychologist was proposing that we, as professionals, act in the role of enforcing the rights of children by checking whether parents are providing for their children. If we play the role of policemen, we are going to alienate parents and promote a distrust of professionals in parents. We must be strengthening, supporting and enabling the family to provide for the care of children. I developed this concern because in Washington we found that poor families didn't trust social workers, and I think it was partially because they saw social workers as enforcers of the welfare system. Yet they trusted the public health nurses whom they saw as helpers and enablers in the care of children. I think we are going to have to develop the positive role of supporting parents rather than the negative roles of rescuers and policemen in order to be effective with families.

Returning to the role of fathers, there is an accumulating volume of research that suggests that if there is a father in the home, he also has a major impact on the child's development. Radin found that the fathers' interactions with the child were related to the child's intellectual development. Rodes finds that adolescent alienation is related to a hostile, rejecting detached father and a hostile over-involved mother. Perhaps that suggests we should work toward a balance with the father more involved with children. Perhaps some mothers should be less over-involved while still accepting and providing for the child's needs.

I was impressed when I met an obstetrician who said that during prenatal care of the mother he was constantly counseling the mother to involve the father in planning for the child, in anticipation of the child. He also asked the mother to involve the father in early care of the child during his regular obstetrical care. He saw his role not merely as providing medical care during pregnancy, but also as building ties between mother and father and infant and father. If we had a set of professions and institutions that had strengthening families as their major role, I think we would have a major impact on child development. A Swedish pediatrician at the time of delivery in the hospital brought fathers into the room with the infant and encouraged the fathers to hold and care for their infants. He found on follow-up that those fathers spent far more time interacting with those infants.

I believe that in all of our future planning for parents, we should also try to contact other family members--fathers, grandmothers, and others--and try to build a family system of caring for children. In intact homes the quality of the marital relationship relates to the child's development. An English psychiatrist, Rutter, found that conflict and tension in the family, predicted antisocial aggressive behavior in boys. He found that all three family relationships--the mother-father relationship, the father-son relationship and the mother-son relationship--were important to the boy's adjustment. Hetherington finds that in separating and divorcing families, that children reflect conflict and tension in father-mother interactions. Other research suggests that an unbroken, unhappy home has more of a negative impact on the child than a broken home. It seems to me we have to go beyond supporting parenting. We have to also think of the relationships between parents--mother and father--or the relationships between grandmother and mother if

it is a single parent home with a grandmother present . . . or relationships in the whole family network. Again, the ecological point of view is that the whole network of relationships impacts on the child's total development.

I consulted with a student who had been an educator and a public nurse who said she believed maladjusted children in the classrooms came from unhappy families. She had principals and teachers nominate maladjusted boys and adjusted boys and then went out and gave the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test to the families and found very large differences in marital adjustment related to adjusted and maladjusted behavior in the classroom. I'm not sure what we can do about that situation, but I think each of us in our own way should ask--are we supporting the father's role, and are we supporting a positive interaction and communication between mother and father.

I've developed a Relationship Inventory for Families and used it in a small pilot sample in which mother, father, child and sibling each described the other family members. In a factor analysis on the set of 48 scales, I find the major dimension in families is love and acceptance versus hostility, rejection, detachment. It fascinates me that a major component of love and acceptance is the quality of communication in the family and the one variable most related was "Do you feel this other person truly listens to you and your point of view and your needs?" Teaching parents to listen to one another and our learning to listen to parents is a major component of acceptance. Other components of love and acceptance were accepting the different ideas of others, confiding, and communicating as well as expression of affection and positive evaluation.

I'd like to stress the importance of positive evaluation of the other because that relates back to that whole concept of the pathological approach as opposed to a positive developmental approach in our programs. A black psychologist told me that the behavioral sciences have become the modern demonology. They are teaching us to see demons in everyone; teaching us to look for symptoms, pathology, deviations, and deficiencies. Perhaps we are teaching this pathological negative view to parents. One of my colleagues developed a rating scale for children composed of 30 symptoms and deficiences in children. She encouraged day care workers and preschool teachers to observe and record symptoms and deviations that children showed. Then she encouraged them to enter the scores on a percentile scale and to interpret this pathology to the parent. From my point of view that is counter-productive to child mental health. What we should be doing is, teaching parents to perceive strengths and skills in their children, to look at their positive growth and development, to look for considerativeness, to look for task completion, to look for language skills, and to reinforce strengths and skills rather than look for symptoms and deficiencies.

That applies to professionals also. Rather than screening for pathology of parents, their deficiencies and deviations, we should look for their strengths, skills, and achievements and the great things they are doing under difficult circumstances. When we recognize the strengths and skills of parents and begin working with those skills and developing them, we are going to be more effective with parents. As a student in clinical psychology I was taught the pathological perspective and learned to focus on diagnosing pathology. Unfortunately some of our mental health literature also teaches parents to look for pathology. I

found the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company had mental health literature for parents which teaches them how to observe hostile, aggressive, withdrawn, and hyperactive distractible behavior. We are teaching the pathological point of view to parents. Yet Baer, et al, studied children who had such severe problems that it was difficult to place them in classrooms. He asked the parents to count their attention to the child's positive behavior; the child's positive behavior increased; and the negative behaviors decreased. That suggests to me that some of our programs which constantly are screening for pathology and focusing upon treatment of pathology, with constant awareness of the negative behaviors, may be counter-productive. We should move from a pathological perspective to a positive developmental point of view.

I have made many mistakes and I have many faults, but I hope I'm developing, that we are all developing professionally, and that we see parents developing positively. Parents make mistakes, but parents try to do their best for their children. I have great faith in the good intentions of parents for their children. We should help them in their attempts to improve.

I'd like to share with you an insight I had recently that perhaps parents who are reported as neglecting and abusing their children aren't truly monsters. In fact, 23 percent of the parents in your survey in Virginia apparently felt they had been abused to some extent as children. There are people under stress who don't have skills and don't have strengths and don't have resources and under stress they do things they regret. They often change, they can be helped, and they are usually interested in their children. Perhaps we could develop a positive view of all parents and not see them as monsters, but see them as people having difficulty

under stress, and as people who need assistance. Perhaps we could be enablers and supporters rather than policemen who are going to rescue children from pathological parents.

What have we tried to do through our professions and institutions in the past? Let's just think of schools. To what extent have we really tried to strengthen and support the child's education in the family and community? Each of you who are working in day care and in schools, ask yourself that question. How much of your time, attention and effort is devoted to strengthening parenting? How much do you look at those children in the classroom or in day care as future parents, who are going to be rearing the next generation of children.

If families are as important as I think, the data indicates it might be important to devote our new programs in education to "parenting." If we get a new teacher aide in the classroom, is that teacher aide going to be devoted simply to the education of that child in the classroom with an educational institutional perspective, or are we going to work on programs that do provide personnel to go into homes and work with parents. The Follow-Through program at the University of North Carolina that Ira Gordon established and Pat Ohmstead is continuing has a major focus on parent involvement. They are working on an educational program that provides support for the parental role. We need to work with parents at every age since parents have an early, continuing, and cumulative impact on children. Parents need early and continuing support, training, and help in their care of children. I had a Ph.D. in child development when I had my first child and it wasn't easy. I could have used some help. I think we all could use some help from time to time from sympathetic professionals. Many parents report they don't

feel they have access to professional help. In a survey of pediatric visits, Starfield and Barkowf found that parents' questions to the pediatrician are often ignored and unacknowledged. Even if parents brought up developmental problems, they often don't get any sympathetic attention. Chamberlin found that of middle-class parents who were seeing pediatricians, 51 percent who felt they had a problem with their child were receiving no help in that developmental problem. Apparently a support system of sympathetic professionals who listen to parents doesn't exist in an accessible form at this time. I think that we must develop that system in order to be effective with children.

I mentioned some of the major dimensions of child functioning in the classroom--language skills, verbal intelligence, and socialization; consideration versus hostility, positive relationships and social adjustment that are heavily influenced in the family. Years ago, I became aware of the fact that parents establish different relationships with the children in early infancy and those relationships tend to persist during childhood. In Nancy Bayley's longitudinal data, we rated mothers behavior from notes on what the mother was doing during the testing session and found a major dimension of love and acceptance, of expressing affection and a positive perception of the child again. It fascinates me that parents who perceive and comment on all their children's positive qualities are parents who apparently developed children's positive qualities and the parents who are always perceiving and commenting on the children's negative qualities are the parents who are not developing those positive qualities. We found that parental love and acceptance was stable from the first three years of life to 9-14 years of age. We found one mother who was very loving and accepting with one child and very hostile, reject-

ing with the other. After breaking the rating case number code we found it was the same mother. She said of the child she rejected more, that he was ugly, he wasn't cuddly and he looked like her husband. Maybe that suggests that developing a positive relationship between husband and wife in marriage may be one of the most important things we can do. In fact, in a little pilot study, I did a relationship inventory for families in which I had all family members describe other family members. The mother's description of the father as loving and accepting correlated highly with the young child's description of the father as loving and accepting. Is it possible that mothers influence children's perceptions of father and vice versa?

We must develop the positive approach of perceiving ourselves and parents as developing people who have strengths and skills and positive qualities and ask, "How can we strengthen and increase those positive qualities?" By focusing upon perceiving, developing, and reinforcing positive qualities, we can increase parent effectiveness. We should increase the positive regard we have for parents as contrasted to that of a professional who asked, "How can you ask me to collaborate with parents, they're fouling up their children's lives?" It is clear he didn't have a positive view of parents. We must work to develop supportive positive relationships between parents and professionals. They aren't natural enemies but rather natural collaborators and friends in their common concern for children.

Our educational problems cannot be solved until we develop an effective system of education in family and community from birth to maturity. The early intervention studies . . . the Parent and Child Centers, Home Start, and Follow-

Through studies--suggest it is feasible to do this if we are willing to devote the time, resources, and manpower as well as to develop the skills to do it. There is a challenge here for each of us to develop the skills, manpower, and programs. Ann O'Keefe and Florence Seguin will tell us more this afternoon.

I'd also like to tell you about some of my recent research. We interviewed parents of kindergarten children and investigated parents' educational beliefs and attitudes, parents' values for children, and parents' behaviors with children and found they were all related to the child's competence in the classroom at kindergarten level. Children of parents who believed in an equalitarian, sharing, listening, interacting role in which you encourage the child's expression in his activities, encourage the child's individual interests were doing well. Children of parents who said children were born bad, and they will be bad unless forced to be good, that the authority of the parent is absolute, that the authority of the teacher is absolute, and that the child should be given uniform treatment, that did not respect the individual needs and individual interests of the child were not doing well. Similarly children of parents who emphasized values of obedience, cleanliness, neatness, and orderliness, manners, and politeness--the conforming virtues--as contrasted to the parents who valued initiative, self-direction, asking questions, imagination, and curiosity did not do well. The problem is partially that some parents do not realize at times that children can be intrinsically motivated; that children are naturally curious creatures. They don't see children as individuals developing, but as children who might be forced to learn and forced to be good. We must teach parents a positive view of children and a positive view of their motivations and potentialities. Children of parents

who reported that they were sharing a number of activities with the child, cooking with the child, talking with the child about their own childhood, talking with the child about many different topics, were doing well in the classroom. These activities are simiiar to the infant educator activities that we observed during the first year of life. The educating parent during infancy and the preschool years continues to educate throughout the child's life. We must learn to support and to develop such parents.

Where do we go from here? I am very concerned about the training of new professionals and the development of new programs. We need to develop new professionals who are aware of the overwhelming power of family and community in the child's life. We must develop new training programs in order that professionals have an understanding of the family's role . . . an understanding of community support and professional support of parents . . . professionals who through practical experience develop skills in relating to parents in a positive way. We need to develop new policy-makers, new decision-makers in our state legislatures, congress, and elsewhere who will not merely throw money at pathology. Someone suggested we must develop a new pathology to find work for new professionals because we always provide money to treat pathology. I think we need to develop funds for developing people, developing families, developing professions and institutions, developing communities with a positive developmental approach. Such efforts would not be primary prevention of pathology alone. It would develop human energy--human strengths and skills. However, I believe the pathological model is the primary influence upon our legislatures and our congress. What we must achieve is a perspective of developing strengths and skills in children from

birth onward, and of developing strengths and skills in parents. Perhaps if we move away from the pathological model, we can reduce the need to treat pathology.

We also need to develop options and alternatives for parents and professionals also; not all professionals want to work with parents. Perhaps some teachers would prefer to work in the classroom with children and some teachers could work more with parents in the community. I had a program during the kindergarten year in which in a single year we tried to get teachers to work with parents. During a single academic year, we tried to work with school administrators and teachers to get them to work with parents and to get parents to work with children. At the end of that year, in the short-term evaluation, the experimental group of children did less well. Perhaps the teachers spent less time in working with the children. Fortunately we could follow the children the next year and found no difference between the experimental and control group. Working with parents is a long-term investment. You are trying to develop strengths and skills that will last throughout the child's lifetime not only with the target child, but with subsequent children in the family. The research on vertical diffusion suggests that if a parent learns skills with one child they will use them with the younger children. Other researches report horizontal diffusion, that if you teach a skill to a parent, their neighbors and friends and relatives also develop those skills. Changing the ecology of childrearing is a long-term process as contrasted to the short-term project of teaching the child in a one-to-one teacher-child relationship.

Children also need schools. Perhaps some teachers might work with families and others might work with children. We should ask what our own strengths and skills are and what is our contribution to the total process. In developing a total

child care and education system, we must work with parents. Anita Farel, a doctoral student, found if the mother is full-time in the home and unhappy there, the child does not develop well but if the parent is in the home full-time, not working, and enjoys being in the home, the child does very well. Perhaps we need options and alternatives for parents. If the parents want to stay at home and rear the children, we ought to support that choice. If the mother feels she would do better going out to work, we ought to support day care. But, I suggest to you that we should provide equal support for parenting as for child care outside the home. If you say to a parent, "If you put your child in day care, we'll provide food and clothing and care for your child, but if you keep your child in the home, you get nothing" . . . that is not a free choice, that is a form of economic coercion to put children into day care. I encourage choices and options recognizing the different needs of parents and the different needs of children.

I was impressed several years ago when I read a book called Images of Hope that said before anything can happen, first you have to imagine it can happen. I can imagine that if we develop a set of professions and institutions that have as a major goal, if not a primary goal, of strengthening and supporting families and parenting, then I believe we can develop more effective families. Home Start has shown it can happen if you devote the resources to it. Follow-Through has shown it can happen, experimental early intervention programs and the Parent and the Child Development Centers have shown it can happen. If you imagine it can happen, then believe it can happen, then you will work to make it happen. It is going to take a lot of work to develop a system of support for parenting. It is going to take work at the university level . . . of university training of new

professionals . . . and providing workshops and training for current professionals in order to shift some of their efforts to working with parents. It is going to require a lot of work for parents to develop the skills they need with their own children. It is going to take a lot of work by teachers to begin to understand parenting and to see those children in their classrooms as future parents and to see the parents of those children as important elements in the child's total education and care. It is going to take a lot of work from each of us, and I haven't told you today what you should do. Each of us must find in our own situation and in our own way, what we can do to provide a system of support for parenting. The goal is to develop professionals who are partners, collaborators, and friends of parents rather than enemies and rescuers of children. Thank you.

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PRESENTATION BY DR. ANN O'KEEFE AND MS. FLORENCE SEGUIN
AT VCU PARENTING CONFERENCE - APRIL 25, 1979

Ann O'Keefe:

We are very pleased at the manner in which this conference has been organized. Flo and I have known and worked with Dr. Schaefer for some years now and we're delighted to have the opportunity to have a presentation which would build on his. The fact is that the kinds of thinking evident here; Dr. Schaefer's thinking in particular, helped set the groundwork and rationale for much of the work Flo and I have done when we were with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare from 1971 on. What we have chosen to do this afternoon is to touch on four areas that are a follow-up to Dr. Schaefer's "perspectives" presentation this morning. The four areas that we are going to talk about are focused on responses to these questions:

(1) Is there a need to create a partnership with parents?

(2) What does partnership mean?

(3) Where are we/you on the continuum of this partnership idea?

(4) What are some practical tips on creating partnerships? . . . also, what about resources for parenting?

In other words, we plan to talk about the practical aspects--what does this whole notion of evolving toward a partnership with parents really mean to us as individuals and perhaps to the institutions in which we are working? The way we have organized our presentation is the way we have worked together in the past. Flo will open each of the areas with a general presentation and then we will share the microphone back and forth illustrating some of the points from the experiences

we've had. I want you to know that Flo has visited and worked closely with more parent education and home-based programs than anyone else in this entire country. Her job with the Home Start-Head Start program was to visit programs all over the USA . . . and that took her into urban and rural and Indian and Alaskan and migrant programs and homes, everywhere.

Florence Seguin:

My one claim to fame is that I've had the privilege and the honor of spending the last 8 years of my life working closely with parents and with staff who have been working with parents. Now, if you are expecting anything esoteric, you're not going to get it. I have a reputation now, after 8 years, and that reputation is that Flo never says anything that we don't know, and that is true. I have finally discovered my nitch and it is to raise my consciousness and the consciousness of other people about (1) things we know but we are not aware of (2) things we know but we do not act upon and (3) things we think that we should know but do not take the time or trouble to consider. So what I'm to share with you is going to be very practical.

The first question is . . . "Is there a need?" I'd like to extend this question: Is there a need to create a partnership with parents from the point of view of parents? And the second question--is there a need to create this partnership from the point of view of professionals? I think this morning we have already heard some of the responses of parents to that question. Families right now in our country are both in good and bad shape. And part of the bad shape is perhaps due to the fact that families feel so isolated since we have removed much of their power. We have taken away much of their control from over their own lives and the lives of their

children. We professionals have assumed the authority. We have placed ourselves in a position where we pretend to know the answers. In a sense, parents have often relinquished that control to us because they have been overwhelmed. We are living in some tough times. Just look at divorce rates, at single-parent families, at the economy, at middle-class families who are struggling to make ends meet and, if you don't believe that parents need us, I think that you need time to reconsider the answer to the first part of the question . . . , Do parents need this partnership?

The second part of that question is, "Do we professionals need this partnership with parents?" Many of our efforts are not only ineffective . . they are downright futile . . , and especially so when we try to work with children in isolation from their parents. In my mind the tragedy is that we have so many committed people who are spending energy, time, money and effort doing things in a less effective way than we could. I would just like each of us, in whatever role we play, to take a second to look at the effectiveness of what we are doing if we do not utilize those parents. Let's look at it from a very practical point of view. We do not have enough time or money or energy to do everything we want to do for children unless we forge a partnership with parents. And so I think each of us must thoughtfully answer the question . . . Is there really a need for partnership from those two perspectives . . . parent and professional?

Ann O'Keefe:

Dr. Schaefer mentioned the pathological models and the hospital models. I want to draw an illustration from a hospital setting too, but it is a very positive illustration. You remember "the old days" when a child, upon being hospitalized, was separated from his or her parents on the grounds that the parents were a nuisance.

Afterall, sometimes parents get very emotional when their children are sick or undergoing surgery. Those were the days when parents had visiting hours from 3:00 to 4:00 on Tuesday and Thursday, but today, hospital staff realize that with young children the worst part of the hospitalization is often not the physical trauma involved, but the long-term effects on them of separation from family . . . the psychological effects. The point is that sometimes, although parents may indeed be a bit of a "nuisance" to the staff from time to time, the long-term effects may be very beneficial to the child. In fact, I want to change the words 'may be beneficial' to 'probably will be', for I believe that given all we know in this day and age, it is irresponsible for any of us involved in child development issues not to work closely with parents. Simply put, there is tremendous and consistent evidence of the long-term benefits of such involvement. You cannot read the research responsibly and turn away from it. The second point I wanted to make was to follow up on Earl's thesis about continuity. In this day and age where children are very mobile and transient, parents and family are the continuity and stability in the children's lives. Since October, I've been working in a Navy setting where mobility is a built-in part of life. Many children in the Navy families can count on the fact they will be going to a dozen or more schools during their school career. Therefore, we are emphasizing the importance of involving parents, so that they consciously realize the role they play as the stability and continuity factors in their child's life. And the third and last point I want to make is that very often parents are the expert on a particular matter with regard to their child. Many of you who have had the opportunity to work with handicapped children have run into parents who have so thoroughly researched their child's particular handicap that they are a "walking encyclopedia"

on that illness or handicap. With a little bit of help from the professional wisdom and maturity you can bring to them, you can often get a powerful team going.

Florence Seguin:

The second question that we'd like to ask is, "What does this word "partnership" really mean when we apply it to parents?" I don't know what it means to you, but I'd like to suggest some things it could and should mean to some of us. I become very nervous when I hear words like "helping and assisting." I prefer to think of words such as "together with," "in conjunction with," and "hand-in-hand." If we begin on the premise that we are 'helping and assisting;' if in our mind we are thinking of the parent at being at point "0" until we come on the scene to provide assistance, we're in trouble already! Most of you in this room are parents of long-standing and I'm sure you would not want me to assume that you haven't acquired some valuable human experience and knowlege. So what I'm saying is not a negative criticism; I'm saying that all of us have to be very careful about our own attitudes. What do we really believe parents possess to work with? We hear often of parents having a difficult time coping, and it seems to us that they are in a real mess. But, how often have we said, "If I look hard enough and long enough, surely I will find something good to work with." If we honestly do not believe that a parent has any positive quality or potential to work with, then, I feel we better step aside from any involvement with parents or children and really begin thinking of where we're coming from. We first become conscious of what we are feeling about parents before we can talk about a partnership. Indeed, I'd like to suggest that many parents are much farther along than many of us professionals acknowledge them to be. I'd like to suggest that 'partnership' does not mean to say we deny the profes-

sional experience and training any one of us has had. It does not mean that we should shrug off our responsiblity. It means that we acknowledge we have a good bit to contribute; but we are going to parents, providing them with additional information they do not have, recognizing that we are building on what they do have as parents. We are trying to enhance the parenting skills or enhance whatever knowlege they have. In turn, they are going to share with us the information, experience and knowledge they have about life in general and about their children, in particular, in a joint effort. It is not "they and we"; it is not "we behind them, they in front of us" . . . but "together." There is a poster that says, "I don't want to walk behind or in front of you, I want to walk beside you." I'd like to suggest it is very important, when we start talking about a partnership, to become aware of what we feel, for that is the starting point with parents. We need to become aware of how we feel about the partnership.

Ann O'Keefe:

I want to briefly add to what Flo has said about stressing the positive. We both have seen situations where children are already three years old and their teacher really believes she will be "rescuing" the child. But, by some miracle, this child who has survived three years without her and that's the whole point: any child who has survived three or four years probably had someone in his life doing something right! Focusing on the positive is extremely important.

I'd like to illustrate from an experience I had in my first year of teaching. I was a young city girl teaching in a rural community. Early on in the first two weeks of school a little farm boy in my fifth grade had somebody step on his thumb and from where I was coming from that was a real problem! His thumb was red and scratched

and I immediately thought of infection and tetnus. This was a rural community, and I tried to call the parents and couldn't get them. Finally, I got the mother that night to report that Glen had his thumb stepped on, and I was very concerned about it. She was dumbfounded that the teacher would call over a little matter like that. But, she was also amazed that I'd call not to complain, not to say that he got his thumb in the way of somebody's heel, but to express a concern about her child. I realized at that moment that your first contact with any parent ought to be on a positive or at least a neutral note. From that time on, I've tried to make certain that all my initial contacts with parents were on some kind of positive or supportive note so that later on if any difficulties emerged that I wished to talk about, there had been some indication of a prior positive concern for their child.

Florence Seguin:

I could now ask: "where are you" and "where are we?" We are somewhere on that continuum between working alone without the parents or moving closer toward the parents. I do know this . . . when parents are welcome and when they are wanted and when they are needed, parents do and will respond. And, so when we talk of that movement toward a partnership we need to remember that the more we move toward those parents in a real acknowledgement of who and what they are and the important role they play in whatever work we do . . . in that same measure those parents will gradually move toward us. I have often been asked by home visitors, "How do I get parents involved?" My answer is, "You involve parents by involving them!" When i saw you walk into the door of that home to make that home visit, I was watching you very closely. What I saw was eye contact between

you and the children. You greeted the children and hugged the children. The minute the door opened, you had already isolated parents. You had not involved the parent; you started the home visit on that foot.

I want to involve you, here, today. Notice I'm going to talk a little louder. And, so there is no mystery about what I want to share with you this afternoon. Where are you? Where am I on this continuum? Where do I want to go? If I want to go somewhere in creating a partnership, then I've got to start taking some forward motion toward the parent. I'd like to suggest--'go slowly.' Once I personally make a decision about something I get all excited about it, and I jump in. Often I've found I've jumped into the wrong thing. If you are someone who has not worked closely with parents, you may not feel comfortable about it at first. If parents are used to having you telling them to stay out of it, maybe they're not ready to suddenly have you open up your arms, and say, "Come on in." What I'm suggesting is that when we try to work at a different approach--especially one that relates to communicating with other human beings--there is a certain element of trust one needs to build. There is a certain element of apprehension one has to dispel. There is a certain amount of comfortableness we have to feel with anything new we do. So, I suggest that often when you make decision that you do really want to get more involved in working closely with parents to create this true partnership that you need not throw yourself in 100%. Maybe you'll want to start in a small way. Maybe you'll want to gradually be able to make the parents realize "that we really want to start working at this partnership, we want to get you working with us"--Go slowly and cautiously!

Ann O'Keefe:

Be prepared for some setbacks. Be prepared to make some decisions you will regret. I was personally aware of a situation in which a teacher of a retarded child was talking with a parent. The teacher thought she was discussing the child in a professional way, by simply alerting the parent to some misbehavior on the part of the child in the classroom. And the parent was nodding and apparently being very receptive. When the child got home, the parent was very abusive to the child, and, in fact, broke the child's arm. The young teacher involved in that situation was horrified, and the lesson she easily could have learned was: never talk to a parent, never confide in a parent, keep parents out of it, for look what they do. That lesson would be very easy to learn because the example that I gave to you is a true example. It is important to realize we have to learn the right lesson. As Flo has said, you really have to assess where your "partner" is, and who is really hearing what, and what the effects are likely to be. Parents as people are very different, each from the other, just as all of us are different, each from the other.

Another point I want to raise is: how does one move forward in creating a partnership? Flo says one can begin involvement by involving people. There is another simple thing that I'd like to draw to your attention. By way of background, I'll tell you there was an analysis of research done recently in which hundreds of Head Start teachers were asked on a survey, "What are the most frequently asked questions by preschool and Head Start teachers, and how can research findings help answer them?" For example, one of the questions raised was, Everybody says you are supposed to individualize your work with children.

Well, how do I do that when I'm dealing with many other children in the classroom? Other questions had to do with the areas of language development. Has research indicated any specific techniques for developing language? One I was particularly interested in was, Everyone says parent involvement is so important. Are there any particular consistent findings from research that indicate ways to involve parents? And the one finding that struck me the most is this--"The way a child perceives the respect between his/her parents and the teacher is one of the biggest factors in the child's own self-concept development." Yet, does the child often see the teacher respect mommy or daddy? I was in a day-care center for infants recently; the parents would come in to deliver the child, and there might be a one-minute interaction between the parents and teacher. There would be an opportunity for the teacher to say, "Oh, Johnny soiled himself yesterday," or an opportunity to say, "Oh, Johnny did this or that, which was very positive." These 30 seconds, these 60 seconds, these 80-second interactions that take place in the child's view and hearing are very, very important regarding the way the child sees himself and the way the parent feels about you. For any of you who are parents, you know how good it feels when someone compliments your child. A good way to begin parent involvment and to get parents' attention is honest, positive, forthright things to be said about one's child. I'm a parent and I love it, I imagine you do too.

Florence Seguin:

In regard to practical suggestions, there are many things we can do that do not cost money. People in here have been smiling at some things I've been

saying and responding to smiles I have been giving them. That didn't cost either of us anything. And I'm suggesting--yes, exactly what you are thinking--that if you and I are going to look at parents as partners with us, we must remove this wall, uniform, mask, whatever it is that we put on when we think of ourselves as "professionals." We must begin to relate to those parents as people, for that is what we have in common: our humanity.

Even if we had the time, we could not begin to tell you exactly how you can do it. There are teachers, nurses, supervisors, social workers and many other professionals represented in this room. I am certain that in the next week you are going to have some involvement with the people you come in contact with. A smile might indicate a different attitude and initiate a new dialogue. I sometimes believe we deliberately make an attempt to keep people from knowing what we are doing, no matter what profession we are in by using jargon. We shut people out who are not in our profession. We use training we have had as a means to keep people at a distance and these are the very same people we are trying to help. We must become more aware that we often threaten and inhibit the people that we deal with by hiding behind and using our professional training. We have to be conscious of this in creating a partnership. We need to give off some different messages to parents.

It is easy after a day like this for you to say, "That is all great, but I don't have any money to do that, I don't have any time to do that." I'm here to tell you that for eight years I've been telling Home Visitors to tell parents, "We're not telling you to do anything extra. We're suggesting that when you make the bed, when you wash the dishes, when you hang out the clothes--you use those opportunities

to interact with your children and squeeze into those moments all the learning and love that is possible." Each one of us here, in whatever interactions we have with these children and these parents, needs to take advantage of the opportunities that already exists, to begin creating the partnerships. Use the times parents come for report cards, the times they come to your office, to begin asking them what they think and how they feel. I heard this morning, in the single-parent group about a fictitious mother who we know is real, who is so overwhelmed as a single parent she can scarcely cope. If the counselor sends her a little note saying, "Come to the school because your nine-year-old son is having trouble," she is distraught. What is happening to us when we aren't aware that this mother of that nine-year-old is a single parent and is already overwhelmed with problems. The starting point is to be sensitive to what we are doing to people. First of all, we need to know who these people are. How can we relate to these children or to these parents when we know nothing about them? That may take extra time, but again we need to look at the commitment we have brought to the task and to consider how futile our efforts will be unless we begin learning something about the people with whom we are working. We can become more knowledgeable and sensitive to people and their needs and thus begin creating this partnership with them.

Ann O'Keefe:

I want to make two particular points on practical suggestions for parenting programs. One builds on Flo's idea that often you just cannot add another thing to what you're already doing. However, you could look at what you're doing and integrate program ideas into it in a different way. I will use as an example the

particular program that I referred to a minute ago in which some of the staff were using the one minute or so that they had in the morning to convey to the parents all the things that happened the previous day. In this particular community . . . an Appalachian mining community . . . the parents were leaving their children all day for a combined child development and day care situation. In fact, these parents literally were gone about twelve hours each day. Somebody from the government questioned . . "Well, where is your parent involvement program?" There simply wasn't time to have a separate parent involvement program in the usual sense. In this particular Appalachian community we talked about the fact that if indeed you need a parent involvement program because of a government mandate or you want a parent involvement program because of your own moral commitment, then, how can you reorganize the time you already have to allow for a parent program? These children were so young that they couldn't just be dropped off at the door. Every morning, the parents would physically bring the children into the classroom, take off their jackets or coats, and frequently do other tasks with and for the children before they left for work. The staff of this program did come to grips with how they could turn that brief time period into their parent program by communicating the positive aspects of the children's development and by giving constructive suggestions to the parents. This would take a two to four minute period each morning . . . when parents were there anyway.

That leads me to my second point. A couple of years ago I became very convinced that looking for what we call "promising practices" and assimilating them . . . and advertising them . . . is a very important part of our job. It is

very easy to find and talk about what's wrong with anything, what's wrong with Head Start, what's wrong with public schools, what's wrong with this parent, what's wrong with us, what's wrong with anything. What is just as important is to try and identify what's right with anything. One of the things we began doing with the Child and Family Resource Program (and it can be done any place) was identifying people and practices that clearly were positive and effective. By the same token, when you have an interaction with a colleague, with a parent, or with a child, it goes a long way to highlight something that you see that is favorable and positive: that's part of what we call highlighting the promising practices.

Now, I will comment on a recent study (Feb. 1979) done by the U. S. General Accounting Office. GAO is well known for its exposes of corruption and "unpromising" practices within the government. Thus, when they began doing a study of child and family development programs, there were some nervous people. But, I was not one of those nervous people, even when it came to light that the program that I was directing at that time . . . The Child and Family Resource Program . . . was to be part of their investigation. I said to myself . . . "Why should I be nervous? I have been beating my brains out for six years. If it can't stand scrutiny by the GAO, then, maybe we ought to close down!"

Well, the GAO Staff went to one site of the Child and Family Resource Program and were so surprised by what they saw that they decided it must be a fluke. So, they went to the second one and they found a second fluke. They ended up going to four of the eleven Child and Family Resource Programs and found four "flukes!" They were impressed with what they found, not only in the philosophy, but in application. One of the GAO people told me they had never

seen a program which so consistently applied what the rhetoric said would be applied. When they wrote their report they concluded that, in their view, appropriate government involvement in family and child support development programs should be considered an investment in the country rather than a cost to the country. The difference between the words "cost" and "investment" are dramatic. We were pleased, happy and proud that their involvement and work with the Child and Family Resource Program was a major contributor to helping them reach that conclusion.

They did things like take approximately 100 families at random and simply track them back in history. For example, if the record had said the family was referred to a particular social agency, the GAO Staff went to the social service agency to see how the referral took place. Did it happen? Did anything good come out of it? They were uniformly convinced that, in fact, community people were able to pull off this program. Indeed, the evidence is compelling about the effectiveness of parent involvement and family involvement programs. There are plenty of research documents you can follow up on, and, you now have "ammunition" to go back to your school board or community and cite the evidence which urges more work with the parents.

Florence Seguin:

Dr. Schaefer spoke of "images of hope" and said, "First you have to imagine it can happen, believe it can happen, and, then, do it." We all have heard about the bottle of wine that is half full. The reality is that it is half 'whatever you perceive.' . . . full or empty! Many times we can look at it and say it is half full. I happen to

be the type of person who likes to believe it is half full. I try not to be "Pollyanish," but, if I am, there are enough "Doomsday" people to bring me back to reality! So, I'd like to suggest we go out and realize, in spite of all the difficult things out there and all the things we don't have that there is a half full bottle of wine somewhere.

Now, for my real life story (I may embarrass Ann). Eight years ago--two weeks after Ann was hired by Head Start to begin working on a home-based Head Start Demonstration Program, I was hired. I saw her hold in her hand at the first meeting, a 8 1/2 x 11" sheet of paper with one single-spaced type written paragraph--not a whole sheet of paper. And the mandate written on that sheet was that Ann was to begin implementing in Head Start a home-based comprehensive child development program. She had to see that sixteen home-based programs were started locally in six months. At that time in Head Start, there were officially no home-based Head Start programs . . . only a few isolated instances where Head Start workers were trying to work closely with families. Thus, in 1971, there were no comprehensive Head Start home-based programs in existence. Today, in 1979, 8 years later, there are over 400 Head Start, Home Start programs, and over 20,000 Head Start families in this country who are receiving some kind of home-based services. I am telling you this story because each of us lives within the limitations of our own perceptions and humanity, where we are constantly feeling there is so much to be done. The job often seems so big as to be impossible. Yet, I am convinced that if we are willing to do a little, if we can imagine it, if we can believe it, and then if we can adapt the positive attitude, I have seen in Ann and Earl, <u>we can do it</u>!

From one paragraph, eight years ago, Ann has established a program in this country that the GAO indicates to Congress and to the President is a wise

investment for money spent by the American taxpayer. Now, why am I telling you this about Ann? I'm telling you about a real human being, who believed she could do something and did it. And, I would like to suggest that as we leave this afternoon, we go out believing we can do something to create this partnership, and we can!

RESOURCES

Newsletters, bulletins, etc.

The Bulletin of the National Clearinghouse Project for Home-based Services to Children

National Clearinghouse for Home-based Services to Children
Institute of Child Behaviour and Development
The University of Iowa
Oakdale, Iowa 52319

*Other available Clearinghouse Publications:

Selected Bibliography on Home-based Services for Children and Families (revised January, 1979)
Review of Research on Home-based Services
A Directory of Model Home-based Social, Education, and Health Services to Children and Families

Parent Talk--Each month Parent Talk publishes two articles, written in simple, easy-to-understand language articles which will help parents face and solve everyday problems of normal, young children. Parent Talk is written by parents for parents. One year subscription (24 articles) $6.95/year.

Parent Talk
c/o Sunshine Press
6402 East Chaparral Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85252

Parent Resource Center Newsletter--Quarterly, $2.00 Individual; $6.00 Family--This quarterly newsletter describes how parents help parents--giving emotional support, references, parenting skills, ideas, and encouragement.

Parent Resource Center
42 East Jackson Street
P.O. Box 3028
Orlando, Florida 32802

New Generation Newsletter--Parent Education Directory--excellent resource for ideas, suggestions about parenting courses, how to involve parents effectively in programs, how professionals can work effectively with parents.

New Generation
530 Washington Street
Chagrin Falls (Cleveland), Ohio 44022

P.A.C.T. (Parents and Children Together) Report--Monthly publication seeking to utilize the skills of the human development specialist working intensively to keep families intact.

Parents and Children Together
160 Old Main
Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Family Study Center PIPELINE--Published 6 times annually; excellent resource identifying workshops, conferences related to family.

FSC PIPELINE
Family Study Center
Division of Home Economics
141 Home Economics West
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Parent and Child: Growing Two-Gether Newsletter

Parent and Child: Growing Two-Gether
Council on Quality Education
Early Childhood & Family Education Program
Independent School District 271
Parent-Child Center Room 121 & 122
Valley View Elementary School
351 East 88th Street
Bloomington, Minnesota 55420

The American Family--published bimonthly as a clearinghouse for information on national family policies, programs, and actions. Annual subscription rate: $35 U.S. and Canada; $40 Foreign.

Wakefield Washington Associates, Inc.
Suite 511
1129 20th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

The Center for Parent Education Newsletter--Available by subscription at the rate of $15 a year (6 issues). This newsletter features the following: articles on especially important topics related to infants and toddlers, reviews of educational information and materials, listings of useful resources, articles on current events in the field, notices of events and opportunities, question and answer column, etc.

The Center for Parent Education
55 Chapel Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02160

Also offers advisory service on materials for education for parenthood activities, consultation on research and service programs, professional training institutes and workshops, a.v. materials, guidance, etc.

OTHER RESOURCES (programs to inquire about, programs to visit)

The Home and School Institute (inquire about materials, workshops, etc.)
c/o Trinity College
Washington, D.C. 20017
(202) 466-3633

The Parenting Materials Information Center (inquire about materials)
Early Childhood Division
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East 7th Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 476-6861

Moreno Educational Co. Spanish parenting materials
7050 Belle Glade Lane
San Diego, California 92119
(714) 461-0565

The Center for Family and Child Development
Three Carhart Avenue
White Plains, New York 10605
(914) 948-5187

Parents' Magazine Films, Inc.
Dept. 52H
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Center for the Study of Parent Involvement
2544 Etna Street
Berkeley, California 94704

The Profession of Parenting Institute
1609 Poplar Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19130
(215) 236-8008

PARTNERS
Report on Jackson Public Schools Parent Education Demonstration Project
4215 Sunset Drive
Jackson, Mississippi
(608) 354-6969

Mr. Stephen S. Bedi
Principal/Project Coordinator
Takoma Park Elementary School
201 Philadelphia Avenue
Takoma Park, Maryland 20012
(301) 589-0155

Using parents on different "levels" of involvement

Prepared by Florence Seguin 4/79